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Illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory

Security Council
Seventieth year

Identical letters dated 9 June 2015 from the Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, the President of the General Assembly and the President of the Security Council

On 5 June 2015, the Palestinian people sombrely marked the forty-eighth year of the Israeli military occupation. As this belligerent foreign occupation of our land and subjugation of our people inconceivably approaches a half-century of duration, we call upon the international community to affirm the illegality of the Israeli occupation, a cruel and devastating occupation that has gravely violated every provision of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War of 12 August 1949 (Fourth Geneva Convention), the international humanitarian law governing situations of foreign occupation. That law stipulates that occupation is a temporary, not indefinite, situation imposed to facilitate the unlawful oppression by the occupying Power and its forced displacement of the occupied civilian population and the colonization and de facto annexation of the occupied land.

After nearly five decades of the Israeli military occupation of the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip since 1967, the time is long overdue for the international community, including the Security Council, to unequivocally demand that the occupation be ended forthwith in all its manifestations and to act collectively and responsibly to ensure this outcome. The obligations of the international community in this regard, as well as towards enabling the realization of the long-denied inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including those of self-determination and independence, and the attainment of a just, lasting and peaceful solution to the question of Palestine in all aspects, are very clearly based on international law, the principles of justice and equity and the relevant United Nations resolutions. In this respect, we underscore the abiding relevance of the Madrid principles and the Arab Peace Initiative, and the need for their swift implementation to achieve a comprehensive, durable and just peace.

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These objectives have become more urgent, not less, with the passing of the decades and the accumulation of wrongs perpetrated by Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian people and the consequent trampling of human rights and thrashing of the credibility, primacy and efficacy of international law and the international system, including, in particular, the Security Council. While these laws continue to be gravely, systematically and grossly breached by Israel, it has appallingly never been held accountable and has been permitted to act with absolute impunity as a State above the law without consequence, with devastating impact on the Palestinian people and the compounding of this injustice and conflict with each passing day, making the prospects for peace ever more elusive.

The most recent glaring example in this regard is the failure to list Israel as a violator of children's rights in the annual report of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict, notwithstanding the fact that it so clearly meets the criteria. We fear that this regrettable failure to hold Israel to the same standards to which all other States are held will only further undermine the credibility of the United Nations system and the children and armed conflict mechanism, which is intended to protect children in situations of armed conflict, and further embolden the impunity of Israel, resulting in more suffering, trauma and grief for innocent Palestinian children and their families.

The fact is that Israel, the occupying Power, has not for a minute ceased its illegal policies and measures in Occupied Palestine, including East Jerusalem. Notwithstanding the repeated appeals and calls by the international community, including in the context of United Nations resolutions, Israel not only continues but also has intensified and broadened the scope and scale of its violations, with grave consequences. Instead of acting in good faith to end this illegal occupation, Israel continues to deliberately cause more suffering for the Palestinian people and to entrench its occupation and destroy the contiguity and viability of the Palestinian land and the prospects for realizing the two-State solution for peace.

This is evidenced in the military aggression in the Gaza Strip over the past year, where the Israeli occupying forces killed, injured and maimed thousands of Palestinian civilians, including children, women and older persons, and caused wanton and massive destruction to homes and vital civilian infrastructure, in addition to the continued imposition of a crippling, dehumanizing and illegal blockade. This is also evidenced in the deteriorating situation in the West Bank, where settlement colonization and land grab activities of Israel have continued non-stop, including the forced displacement of thousands more Palestinians, primarily Bedouin families, in particular, in the areas of Occupied East Jerusalem and the Jordan Valley; the confiscation of huge tracts of land and the destruction of hundreds more Palestinian homes and properties to facilitate the expansion of Israeli settlements and the wall; the continuing detention, arrest, imprisonment and torture of thousands of Palestinian civilians, including children; and the unrelenting violence, terror and provocations by extremist Israeli settlers, including towards holy sites, especially the Al-Aqsa Mosque.

We will continue to document these Israeli crimes in our determined pursuit of accountability. Accordingly, I intend to follow up the present letter with a brief review of the grave breaches perpetrated in the recent period by Israel, the occupying Power, as part of this ongoing criminal record. After nearly 50 years of occupation and nearly 70 years since Al-Nakba, we will not relent in our calls and

efforts to uphold international law and protect our people towards the realization of justice, the fulfilment of their inalienable rights and legitimate national aspirations, including to independence in a State of Palestine, with East Jerusalem as its capital, and the attainment of a comprehensive and lasting peace that we have for so long sought and that is so urgently needed for both regional and international peace and security. We call upon the international community, including the Security Council, to respond to the appeals of the Palestinian people and their leadership at this critical moment in time.

The present letter is in follow-up to our 543 letters regarding the ongoing crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, which constitutes the State of Palestine. These letters, dated from 29 September 2000 (A/55/432-S/2000/921) to 11 May 2015 (A/ES-10/679-S/2015/327), constitute a basic record of the crimes being committed against the Palestinian people. Israel, the occupying Power, must be held accountable and the perpetrators brought to justice.

I should be grateful if you would arrange to have the text of the present letter distributed as a document of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 5, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Riyad **Mansour**
Ambassador
Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine to the United Nations